

COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

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J.C.Spilman, Editor

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Serial No. 60

THE ANNOTATED BETTS

A Colonial Newsletter Foundation
Iterative Research Working Document

With this issue we begin a new approach to one important aspect of early American numismatics, the contemporaneous counterfeiting of copper coin. It consists of the preparation of an annotated copy of an address given in April 1886 by C. Wyllis Betts before the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society. The address was printed by request of the Society and distributed to the membership as a single pamphlet separate from any other publication of the Society. In his address "Counterfeit Half Pence Current in the American Colonies and their Issue from the Mints of Connecticut and Vermont", Betts makes the first "scientific" case for the manufacture of counterfeit copper coin by the various official and unofficial mints operating in America during the 1785-1788 era; his work is the cornerstone for subsequent studies. Betts offered very specific details on the various straws lightly grasped by S.S.Crosby in his "Early Coins of America" and totally neglected, later, by H.C.Miller in his "State Coinage of Connecticut". Subsequent work in this area has established with reasonable certainty the identity of many of the specimens that probably originated at the various mint sites.

Over the years a surprising number of CNL Patrons have inquired regarding the availability of a copy of Betts' address. So far as is known to ye Editor, outside of the small quantity of originals distributed by the Society in 1886, the only reprint was one prepared early in 1960 by George Fuld and Bob Vlack. However many of their copies were distributed, they quickly became treasured possessions and vanished onto the shelves of private numismatic libraries.

Several years ago we borrowed an original copy of Betts' address from CNL Patron Edward R. Barnsley and made photographic negatives for use at some future time. Ned's copy of "Betts" was carefully hand annotated with corresponding Miller and Ryder attributions of the Connecticut and Vermont related specimens, and quite a few printing errors were noted. Using Barnsley's annotations as a starting point, ye Editor has added Vlack, Bressett and Barnsley/Miller attributions to the annotations and composed the original seventeen pages into a new format which maintains the original pagination but incorporates the annotations generally to the right or left of the original text in a manner permitting easy recognition of original text versus the modern annotations. Thus -- we have the first iteration of our planned Iterative Research Working Document which we call "The Annotated Betts".

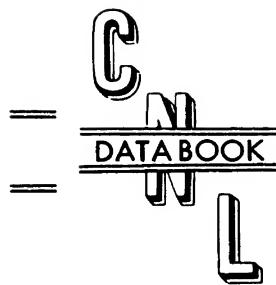
The printed version of Betts' address is probably a considerably abbreviated version of his actual speech before the members of the Society. The line drawings illustrating the various coins are exceptionally accurate and depict exact details of the more unusual specimens; however, we suspect that Betts did not proof read the final typeset version, otherwise he would have rewritten portions for better understanding. As presented, the British specimens are described as British, but later shown to be American in origin, and while this point could be well made with voice inflection and gestures, it just barely comes across in the printed text, hence our questioning annotations on pages 2 and 3.

The next iteration of The Annotated Betts will consist of additional pages comprising photographs of the exact specimens illustrated by the line drawings and additional photographs directly related to the text or to the present annotations. Subsequently we plan several pages of notes, to be prepared by our Patrons, expanding on Betts' comments or relating to subsequent discoveries of related specimens and other items of interest on this topic. Finally, we plan to prepare a die interlock chart similar to that for the Connecticut Coppers (CNL No. 48, page 577) showing the direct interlocking and indirect relationships between the Connecticut, Vermont, Machins Mills and other copper coinage discussed by C. Wyllis Betts.

The assistance of our Patrons is needed to complete this task. We already have available in the CNL photographic files negatives of most of the actual coins depicted by the Betts line drawings, and we have written to various Patrons to obtain those few negatives not in our files or to obtain specimens for photography. Accordingly, all of your suggestions for content and format & photographs or text for publication in subsequent iterations will be sincerely appreciated.

By itself the presentation in the original Betts address is a bit difficult to follow and we hope that the annotations are helpful. The following designators have been used for identifying modern attributions of coinage specimens:

- Miller - Henry C. Miller, "The State Coinage of Connecticut" AJN, Vol. LIII, Part I, 1919. Pages 1-62, plates I-V.
- Ryder - Hillyer Ryder, "The Colonial Coins of Vermont" AJN, Vol. LIII, Part I, 1919, Pages 63-67, plate VI.
- Vlack - Robert A. Vlack, "Early English Counterfeit Halfpence Struck in America" Two Photographic Plates, 1974.
- Bressett - Kenneth E. Bressett, "Vermont Copper Coinage", Chapter 11 in Studies in Money in Early America. ANS, 1976.
- Barnsley - Edward R. Barnsley, various additions to the Miller attribution system published in The Colonial Newsletter, especially the varieties 2.3-T, 2.4-U, 2.5-V and 2.6-BRI-GEO, a "family" group of contemporaneous counterfeits displaying the AUCTORI CONNEC legend and bearing no stylistic relationship to the supposed products of Machins Mills.



THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

BETTS-i

COUNTERFEIT HALF PENCE

CURRENT IN THE

AMERICAN COLONIES,

AND THEIR ISSUE FROM

THE MINTS OF CONNECTICUT AND VERMONT.

ADDRESS

BY

WYLLYS BETTS, Esq.,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN NUMISMATIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

PRINTED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

NEW YORK:

BURGOYNE'S "Quick" Print, 146-150 CENTRE STREET.

1886.

THE ANNOTATED BETTS

A Colonial Newsletter Foundation
Iterative Research Working Document

COUNTERFEIT HALF PENCE

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AMERICAN COLONIES,
AND THEIR ISSUE FROM THE
MINTS OF CONNECTICUT AND VERMONT.

ADDRESS

BY

WYLLYS BETTS, Esq.,

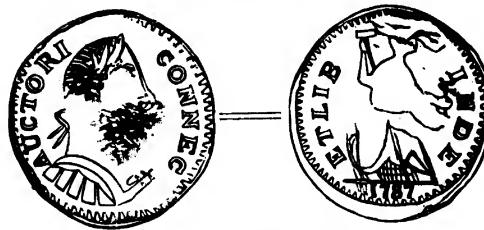
BEFORE THE

AMERICAN NUMISMATIC & ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

PRINTED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

No. 1.—CONNECTICUT CENT.
Goddess facing the right.

Discovered by Lyman H. Low
See page 9



ET LIB. INDE. 1787.

Miller 1.4-WW
of 1787

Coin-counterfeiting in the American colonial period seems to have been almost entirely confined to the imitation of half pence. False or base specimens of the Spanish, French or English silver money current here prior to the issues of the United States Mint are rarely or never seen; and the only instance on record

By whom?

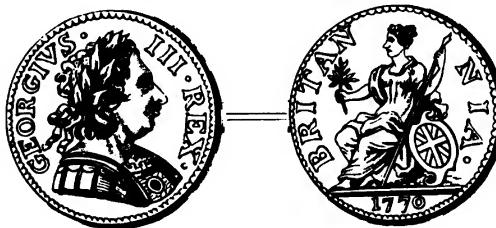
of fraudulent manufacture is that of silvered French sous, which are said to have been extensively circulated as half crowns. Probably the business of clipping and of printing Continental bills was more lucrative than that of die-cutting.

Added emphasis.

The manufacture of counterfeit coppers, if we may judge from the dates of specimens now existing, seems to have commenced about 1741.

I will first call your attention to examples of these British counterfeit half pennies of George II. and III., and, for the sake of comparison, I have brought a specimen of the regular issue of the British mint of each reign.

No. 2.—Genuine Half Penny.



1770.

The Yale College collection, which is the chief source of information on this subject, contains counterfeits of the following dates:

George II., 1741, 1744, 1747, 1757, 177—, the latter being extremely rude and with the head to right;

George III., 1771 (four varieties), 1772 (three varieties, one with u instead of v in GEORGIVS), 1773 (nine varieties), 1774 (nine varieties), 1775 (thirty-five varieties), 1776 (four varieties), 1778 (five varieties), 1781 (one variety), 1785 (one variety), 1786 (one variety), 1787 (four varieties), 1788 (one variety).

All British
counterfeits?

The regular coinage of English half pence ceased in 1775, and in that year the counterfeit coinage seems to have been most extensive (at least thirty-five varieties).

English - NOT American
counterfeits

No. 3.—Counterfeit Half Penny.



Obverse 4
(reverse 75A not illustrated)

In 1776 the four varieties are very like those of 1775. The style of all these coins is similar, and closely copies that of the genuine half pence in the following respects, viz: The bust faces the right and is mailed; the hair at the back of the head is arranged in wavy lines, without any general direction, and in front of the wreath it appears in curly locks, but not sufficiently curled to form ringlets; the wreath terminates at the top of the head in a group of three leaves, and the legend is punctuated with periods opposite the *centre* of the nearest letter, thus: GEORGIVS . III . REX . except in one example of 1771, where the first period is omitted. This one exception is smaller than the other varieties; and in this respect, as well as in the peculiar shape of the head, and the execution and position of the goddess, it bears a close resemblance to one of the Connecticut cents of 1786 mentioned below (page 10).

Discussion of American
(only)
counterfeits?

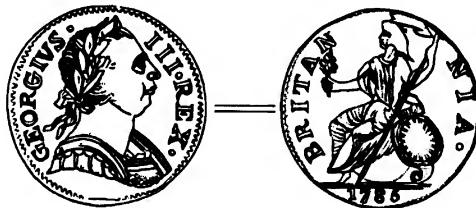
In 1778 a marked change appears in the execution. Three varieties of head are found, all differing from those that preceded, and all closely resembling one another; the

arrangement of the hair is in lines without wave, diverging from a point at the back, this style being found in no other half pennies until we come to 1787. The hair in front of the wreath is in heavy ringlets. The lips, also, instead of being of unequal length, as in all other earlier half pennies, whether genuine or counterfeit (Nos. 2 and 3), are made of two narrow lines of equal length and pursed up close under the nose. The eye is long and almond-shaped, and the laurel leaves are broad and well defined, and terminate in a single leaf above, instead of in a group of three, as in the genuine half penny of 1775, and in almost all other counterfeits. The legend has no period after **GEORGIVS**, and the periods after **III** and **REX** are placed in line with the *base* of the letters, instead of at the centre, as in all other counterfeit half pennies of prior date. (Compare Nos. 5 and 13 with Nos. 3 and 4).

After 1778 the next half pence coined are dated 1781 } and 1785, each year showing one variety of good execution, closely resembling the counterfeit of 1775. The latter specimen is illustrated in No. 4.

} Unknown today.

No. 4.—Counterfeit Half Penny.



1785.

Unknown today?
Perhaps same die
as Vlack Obverse 15
which is muled with
1787 IMMUNE COLUMBIA?

In 1786 there is but one very rude specimen, both n's of "BRITANNIA" being at the right of the goddess (No. 8, p. 8).

Known today as
Barnsley/Miller 2.6-BRI
and Vlack 16-86A

No. 5.—1778.



No. 6.—1787.



Miller Obverse 101 of 1788
Reverse of this is No. 20

Black Obverse 13

No. 16 shows another specimen of same die, but made from a different line drawing.

Black Obverse 12

Obverse of Counterfeit Half Penny.

In 1787 there are four obverse and four reverse dies, which are combined to make five varieties. The execution of three of them is very similar to that of the coppers of 1778, the hair being arranged in the same straight lines and ringlets, and the eye and lips having the same peculiarities. The broad laurel leaves, the absence of the period after GEORGIVS, and the arrangement of the other periods in line with the base of the letters, also appear here.

Yale had four (page 2),
where did he get the fifth?

In 1788 but one variety is found. In this the lips and eye are the same as in 1787; the hair is in lines without wave, and the arrangement of the periods has the same peculiarity, although a period appears before III and none after REX. (No. 14, p. 14).

What, then, can we learn from a study of these coins? Among all these counterfeits, is it possible to determine whether any of them are of American production? If so, which of them shall we claim, and where were they made? That is the subject for discussion to-night.

The copper coins having on the obverse the head and title of George the Third, and on the reverse the legend "Inde et Lib. 1788," have long been properly placed in the American Colonial Series.

These coins are of two kinds ; one having the round head peculiar to the Vermont series, and the legend GEORGIVS . III . REX . and with the legend on the reverse INDE + ET . LIB + 1788; the other having a smaller head and with the period omitted after GEORGIVS, and with the legend on the reverse INDE * ET * LIB * 1788 (No. 21. p. 15).

It has been stated that these coins were both from the well-known mint of Atlee and Mackin, established in 1787, at New Grange, now Newburgh, N. Y. It has also been suggested that the coppers having the obverse "Vermon Auctori," and the reverse "Britannia," as well as the counterfeit half pence of George III., and perhaps some of the pieces now classed as Connecticut coins, also came from this mint (Am. Journal, IX., 53) ; but hitherto no proof of these facts has been offered.

Indeed, the coppers bearing the legend "Georgivs III. Rex.," and the reverse "Britannia," and having dates subsequent to the cessation of the regular British coinage in 1775, are rarely included in the Colonial series.

I intend to-night to show—first, that most of these half pennies of George III., after 1775, were made in this country, and not imported from Birmingham, as is commonly believed ; and, second, that some of them are from the same mint as the coins of Vermont and Connecticut of almost all the well-known varieties, and that they form the connecting link between the coins of those two States.

We start in our investigation with a strong probability in favor of this hypothesis derived from the fact that Mackin and Atlee, of Newburgh, formed a partnership

Miller Obverse 100 of 1788

Miller Obverse 101 of 1788

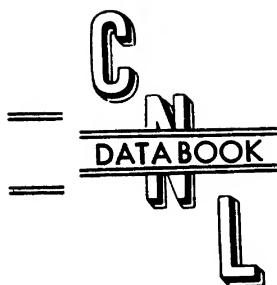
Ryder 13 (Bressett 17-V)

What is this reference?

Miller Reverse I of 1788

Miller Reverse D of 1788

By whom?



in 1787 with Harmon, the sole patentee of the Vermont mint; also that William Buel, the son of Abel Buel, one of the patentees of the Connecticut mint, removed from New Haven to Vermont, taking with him the dies used by his father, and that he went into the business of coining with Mr. Harmon, in Rupert. It also appears that after the mint at New Haven ceased working in 1787 one of the patentees had blank coppers sent to New York to be stamped, probably to the Atlee and Mackin "hardware" factory.

Before proceeding to establish the connection of these coins with those of Vermont and Connecticut, I will say a word regarding the character of the evidence.

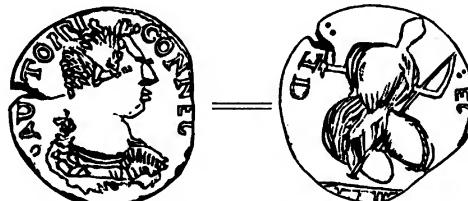
- 1) The first class of testimony to unity of minting is found in the recurrence of the same obverse with various reverses, or *vice versa*. It scarcely requires assertion, and will at once be admitted, that where two dissimilar obverse dies are found combined with the same reverse, they both must have proceeded from the same mint.
- 2) The second kind of testimony consists of unusual forms of letters appearing upon different coins, showing that the same punches were used in sinking the dies.
- 3) The third and scarcely less trustworthy class of evidence is close similarity of execution, especially when exhibiting marked peculiarities not found in other coins of the same character.

This similarity, as already pointed out, is found in a remarkable degree in the three obverses of the half pennies of 1787 when compared with the three obverses of 1778, and the same thing is true also of the reverses, as I will presently show more at length.

One illustration of the first of these classes of evidence I will give in passing, but only as an isolated instance, and not as part of my main argument.

The rude half penny of 1786, already mentioned (No. 8), has a somewhat striking resemblance to a Connecticut cent in my possession (No. 7) having a small head of negro type facing the right, with the legend .AUC-TOIRI . . CONNEC .

No. 7.—Connecticut Cent;

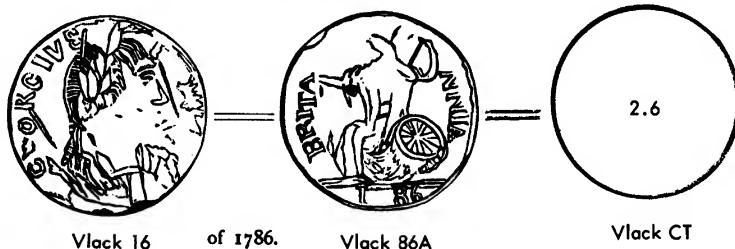


With British Shield.

Called 2.3-T of 1786
by Edward R. Barnsley
Two others, 2.4-U
and 2.5-V are similar

The reverse shows a mere skeleton for the goddess, and bears a *British shield*, but with the legend INDE: : ET — the D being reversed. The representation of Liberty is similar to that of Britannia upon the 1786 half penny.

No. 8.—Counterfeit Half Pennies



VLack 16-86A-CT
Barnsley GEO-BRI-2.6

Now, singularly, I have recently seen a Connecticut cent having an obverse very similar to No. 7, and with the reverse from the same rude die as the 1786 half penny,

thus proving that the latter was of American manufacture.

A familiar instance of the third class of evidence, namely, similarity of execution proving origin in the same mint, is found by comparison of the common type of round-headed Vermont cent with the cent with the same head and with the legend "Georgivs. III. Rex.", and with the Connecticut cent of 1787, reverse "ET LIB INDE . 1787". These heads all have the peculiarity not found in any other Colonial coins, that the hair runs in uniform curved lines from the back of the head to the wreath, each line ending at a separate place on the back of the head and at a separate place in the wreath, and not converging.

Apart from other proof, this peculiarity would indicate that these dies are all the work of the same hand ; and, as these obverses are all found united with the same reverse die, namely, INDE + ET . LIB + 1788, the resemblance is not fancied.

The same head with the same treatment of hair exists in the Vermont cent, with reverse ET LIB INDE ; and a precisely similar treatment of hair exists in the Connecticut cent of 1786, with large mailed bust to right and legend AUCTORI : CONNEC : This latter is again connected by identity of letter punches with the ET LIB INDE cent of 1787, with goddess facing the *right*, recently discovered by Mr. Lyman H. Low, and a cut of which is at the head of this article (No. 1). In like manner it is connected with the two ET LIB INDE Connecticut cents of 1786, and with another cent with the same obverse, of the same date, but with the legend INDE ET LIB. The latter being of *full weight*, will perhaps put at rest Mr. Crosby's charge that these cents are counterfeits.

Ryder 25, 28, 29 & 31.
Bressett 16-U, 21-U,
22-U & 24-U.
Miller 100-I, 125-I,
129-I & 128-I.

Ryder 18 (Bressett 19-X)

Miller 3-D of 1786

Miller 1.4-WW of 1787

Miller 1-A of 1786
and 2.1-A of 1786

Crosby p. 214

Two other obverse dies with a large head to right are almost identical in execution. A specimen of one I produce, and another I have seen with the reverse of the "horned bust" of 1787.

Miller Reverse L of 1787

All the above Connecticut cents with **ET LIB INDE** reverse are proved to be from the same mint by the peculiarity that the letter c is from a smaller set of punches (see No. 1).

Thus the common round-headed Vermont cent, which appears in numerous types in both 1787 and 1788, is unquestionably traced through the "Et Lib Inde" of 1787 to the same mint as all the Connecticut cents of 1786 with the head to the right, and also the "horned bust" of 1787.

Recapitulation of above thesis.

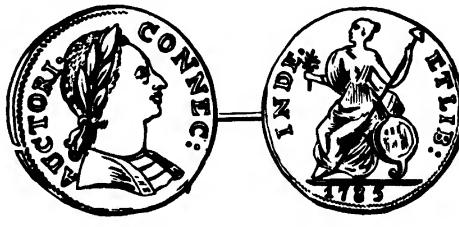
Very important observation.

Miller Obverse 4 of 1787

Another peculiarity of all these Connecticut coins already mentioned is that the wreath is tied in a *bow*, which is not the case upon any of the cents of this State of 1785 (see No. 9), nor upon any others of 1786, nor upon any of 1788, except those with mailed bust to the right, to which reference will presently be made (see Nos. 11 and 15).

No. 9.—Connecticut Cent of 1785.

Reverse



Without Bow.

of same.

Miller 6.1-A.1 of 1785

Having thus illustrated by familiar examples the three classes of evidence, I will now endeavor to show by illustrations of the same kind that many of the British half

pence already described are quite as properly to be considered coins of Vermont and Connecticut as many of the well known varieties bearing the names of those States.

I will first point out the peculiarity of some prominent varieties of the Connecticut coinage of 1787 and 1788, and their common mintage with the cent having the obverse "GEORGIVS III . REX.", and the reverse "INDE * ET * LIB * 1788" (No. 21).

Miller 101-D of 1788

The following varieties are connected together by the use of identical obverse or reverse dies, viz.:

* AUCTORI * * CONNEC * with mailed bust to right, is found with two varieties of the reverse, INDE * ET LIB + 1788; one of these varieties occurs with the obverse * AUCTORI * * CONNEC + (No. 14, p. 12), and the other with the obverse AUCTORI * * CONNEC +, both having mailed bust to right, while the same obverse is found with the reverse * INDE * ET * LIB * 1788; and again, the latter reverse die appears with the obverse AUCTORI. * CONNEC * with mailed bust to left. This obverse again is used with the reverse * IN DE. ET LIB. * 1787. Thus the varieties numbered by Mr. Crosby 3, 4, 5 and 8, of 1788, and No. 12, of 1787, are proved to have been minted at the same place. The mailed bust upon the two last varieties is precisely the same in execution with that of the * AUCTORI * * * CONNECT * *; and one of the reverses (F* of Crosby) of the latter is found with the obverse * AUCTORI * * CONNEC . . ., with draped bust to left.

Miller Obverse 3.1 & 3.2
and Reverses B.1 & B.2 of 1788

Miller Obverse 5 of 1788

Miller Obverses 4.1 & 4.2
of 1788

Miller Reverse K of 1788

Miller Obverse 8 of 1788
(same as Obverse 12 of 1787)

Miller Reverse Q of 1787

Miller Obverse 15 of 1787

Miller Obverse 50 of 1787
(same as Obverse 17 of 1788)

Again, we find another series of Connecticut cents connected in the same way, namely :

AUCTORI * * CONNEC * with head to right, has the reverse * INDE . . . * ETLIB . . 1788; and this reverse

Miller Obverse 6 of 1788

Miller Reverse H of 1788

Miller Obverse 16.1 of 1788 is found with obverse • AUCTORI . • • CONNEC . • (No. 10), with draped bust to left. A variety of the latter obverse, proved to be from the same mint by peculiarities of the letters T and R, has the reverse INDE * ET * LIB * 1788 (No. 21, p. 15); and this reverse is combined with the obverses * AUCTORI . CONNEC * (No. 11), with mailed bust to right, and also with the die Miller Reverse D of 1788

Miller Obverse 2 of 1788

Miller Obverse 101 of 1788 GEORGIVS III . REX . already noticed (p. 6).

No. 10.—Connecticut Cents of 1788,



Miller Obverse 16.1 of 1788

No. 11.



Miller Obverse 2 of 1788

Both having Reverse No. 21.

Miller Reverse G of 1787 The latter obverse has also the reverse INDE * ET LIB * 1787 (No. 19, p. 15), a variety of which is found with the obverses AUCTORI CONNEC . with head to right, and another with head to left and the same punctuation (No. 12).

Miller Obverse 52 of 1787

Miller Obverse 3 of 1787

No. 12.—Connecticut Cent of 1787,



Miller Obverse 3 of 1787

With Reverse No. 19.

These illustrations of the "muling" of dies might be carried still further; but enough has been shown to prove that almost all the well-known varieties of mailed

busts to right and to left, and some of those with draped bust to left, were minted at the same place.

If, therefore, we establish a connection of the coins of Vermont, or of the counterfeit half pence, with any one of these pieces, we establish it with all.

We find, in the first place, that all the Connecticut coppers of 1788, with mailed bust to right, possess the very peculiarities noticed in the counterfeit half pennies of 1778 and 1787, namely, the lips formed of two narrow lines pursed up under the nose, the long almond-shaped eye, the hair without waves at the back and in heavy ringlets in front, and the broad, well-defined laurel leaves, with a single leaf projecting above the head. (Compare Nos. 11 and 15 with Nos. 5 and 6).

Important!

They also, all but one (No. 4 of Crosby), have the wreath tied in a bow at the back, a peculiarity which they share with all counterfeit British half pence of 1778 and 1787, and also with the Vermont and Connecticut cents, already mentioned, which are directly connected together by the copper bearing reverse INDE + ET LIB + 1788 and with the obverse GEORGIVS . III . REX.

Miller 101-I of 1788

The hair shown in one die of Crosby's No. 4 of 1788 is arranged in the peculiar form already noticed of lines diverging from a point at the back of the head. The hair in the other varieties is in fine concentric lines, as in the counterfeit half penny of 1788 (No. 14), and in one obverse of 1778 (No. 13), to which they all have a singular resemblance.

14

No. 13.
Counterfeit Half Penny.

Vlack 13



Reverse of No. 13 is No. 20

No. 14.
Counterfeit Half Penny.

Vlack 23



1778 (second variety, Re-
verse No. 20).

No. 15.
Connecticut Cent.



Miller Obverse 5 of 1788

First variety is No. 5

1788 (Reverse No. 22).

1788.

Two Vermont coppers have the same peculiarities, namely, the obverse VERMON AUCTORI (No. 17), with reverse BRITANNIA . 1787 (No. 18), and the obverse VERMON . AUCTORI *, with reverse * INDE ET LIB * 1788, closely resembling No. 21. Both have the mailed bust to right; both have the wreath tied in a bow; both have the lips made of two narrow lines and pursed up; both have the broad leaves of laurel terminating in a single leaf above, and both have the almond-shaped eyes, and the hair without wave at the back and with heavy ringlets in front. The latter of these Vermont cents is again connected by peculiarities of the letters I and D with the mint of the * AUCTORI . CONNEC * already mentioned (No. 10; reverse No. 21).

Ryder 13 (Bressett 17)

Ryder 27 (Bressett 18)

Ryder 27 (Bressett 18)

Miller 16.1-D of 1788

No. 16.—Counterfeit Half Penny, 1787. No. 17.—Vermont Cent, 1787,

Vlack 12



→ Same as No. 6.



With Reverse "Britannia."

Ryder 13 (Bressett 17)
Reverse is No. 18

Turn now to the reverse of these coins, and you will find peculiarities of execution almost equally well

marked, and running through the dies of almost all the counterfeit half pennies of 1778 and 1787, of the two Vermont coppers last mentioned, and of the Connecticut cents of 1788, with mailed busts to right.

Ryder 13 and 27

No. 18.

Reverse of Vermont "Britannia," 1787,



Ryder 13 (Bressett 17)
Obverse is No. 17

Before the Die was worn out.

No. 19.

Reverse of Connecticut Cent of 1787,



Miller Reverse G.1 of 1787

(No. 12, p. 11).

The head of the goddess is large and very round, and usually well thrown back, such head and position being found in no other coins except the two Connecticut cents with legend INDE * ET * LIB * 1787, already shown to be connected, by the same reverse (No. 21), with the obverse die GEORGIVS III . REX . The goddess also carries in her hand a sprig, of pyramidal shape, composed of three branches, each having three leaves.

Note!

Miller 2-D & 16.1-D of 1787

Miller Obverse 101 of 1787

No. 20.
Reverse of Counterfeit
Half Penny, 1788,
1778



Vlack 788

No. 21.
Reverse of Connecticut
Cent, 1788.



10 and 11
(With Obv. 9 and 10.)
Miller Reverse D of 1788

No. 22.
Reverse of Counterfeit
Half Penny, 1788,



Vlack 88A

These peculiarities do not exist in any other counterfeit half pennies, with one exception, nor in any other

coins of Vermont or Connecticut, and they point unmistakably to the same workmanship.

The one exception is a half penny of George II. of 1747. This shows the same peculiarities, and I am inclined to believe that it was made by the same engraver and given a date forty years earlier than that of its coinage.

Now, comparing the half pennies of 1787 (No. 6) with the Vermont coin (No. 17) having the reverse BRITANNIA, I find in several of them the identical reverse die (No. 18), used with several obverse dies. One in my possession shows both dies in good condition. A second impression, though as fine as when struck, shows the same dies much worn, and the reverse die shows the weakness around the edge always existing in the reverse of the "Britannia" Vermont cent, showing that the die was worn out in striking half pence before its use began with the Vermont obverse.

Next, turn to the half pennies of 1778 (Nos. 5 and 13), and compare with them the obverse GEORGIVS III. REX. which is muled with the Connecticut die of 1788 (No. 21), and here again we find the identical die used with several reverse dies (one of which is No. 20), all having the date 1778; and some of these reverse dies are again found with other obverse dies having the same marked peculiarities (one of which is No. 13).

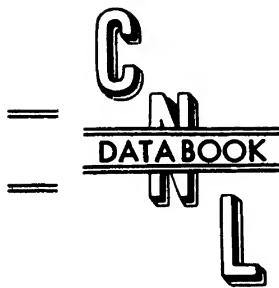
Thus we find an absolute connection of all the half pence of 1778 with the Connecticut coins of 1788; and also an absolute connection of four out of five of the varieties of 1787 half pence with the Vermont coins of 1788. The letter punches, especially the x, used upon the dies of the half pence of 1778 and 1787 also seem

Ryder 13 (Bressett 17)

Note

Miller Reverse D of 1788

Miller Obverse 101 of 1788



to be the same, though the peculiarities are not sufficiently marked to make this certain. The peculiarities of execution, however, are plainly traced to the same hand. The conclusion is inevitable that all these coins are of American production, and that they came from the same mint.

As yet, I have not been able to account for the apparently extensive coinage of half pennies dated 1778 with dies evidently of the same workmanship as those of 1787. I would be inclined to think that those of 1778 had been *antedated* if it were not for the fact that I have not found any one of them used with any one of the 1787 dies, which would naturally follow if all had been made at the same time. It is plain, also, that the GEORGIVS III . REX . die (No. 5) was beginning to give way when used with the Connecticut reverse of 1788 (No. 21), the face of the die having become concave, showing that it had then been much used. Perhaps further investigation may settle this point. If the 1778 half pence are not *antedated*, they are the earliest examples of coinage in the United States after the Declaration of Independence.

Has anyone, today,
established an answer
on this point?

Miller Obverse 101 of 1788

Miller Reverse D of 1788